

Application No.: 09/785,760
Response to OA of 11/07/05

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims:

1. - 3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) A method for aligning transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising the steps of:

facilitating an auction on the portal for a sale of a good between a buyer and a seller;

sending, by the portal, the buyer a shipping form to gather a set of shipping data about shipping the good after the buyer and the seller agree for the sale of the good;

collecting the a set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and seller resulting from the sale of the good the auction;

soliciting bids for shipping services for shipping the good as required by the contract;

receiving a set of shipping bids; and

selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of: facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

6. (original) The method of claim 4:

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation event; and

further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of the event.

7. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein:

the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and

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the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids within the bidding-period.

8. (original) The method of claim 4:

wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;

further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and

wherein the soliciting step includes the step of soliciting bids for providing shipping services for the group of contracts.

9. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

soliciting bids for shipping services from a plurality of shippers and shipping brokers.

10. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

displaying a predetermined set of shipping data on an internet exchange portal website accessible to shippers and shipping brokers.

11. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:

collecting the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria from the seller.

12. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

forwarding the bids onto the seller; and receiving a bid selection from the seller.

13. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a bid with a lowest shipping price.

14. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

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selecting a default shipper if none of the bids conform to the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

15. (currently amended) A method for transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising the steps of:

soliciting unused capacity for providing shipping services to buyers and sellers who participate in auctions facilitated by the portal from shippers; and

receiving a set of bids from the buyers and sellers for the unused capacity;

selecting a winning buyer for shipping goods in the unused capacity; and

sending, automatically by the portal if a seller agrees to ship the goods in the unused capacity, the winning buyer a shipping form to gather information about the goods being shipped in the unused capacity.

16. (currently amended) A computer-usable medium embodying computer program code for causing a computer to align transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising the steps of:

facilitating an auction on the portal for a sale of goods between a buyer and a seller;

after the buyer and the seller agree for the sale of the goods, then collecting, by the portal, a set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and seller resulting from the sale of the goods auction;

soliciting, by the portal, bids for shipping services for shipping the goods as required by the contract;

receiving a set of shipping bids; and

selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

17. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:

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facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

18. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16:

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation event; and

further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of the event.

19. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein:

the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and

the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids within the bidding-period.

20. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16:

wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;

further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and

wherein the soliciting step includes the step of soliciting bids for providing shipping services for the group of contracts.

21. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

soliciting bids for shipping services from a plurality of shippers and shipping brokers.

22. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

displaying a predetermined set of shipping data on an internet exchange portal website accessible to shippers and shipping brokers.

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23. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:

collecting the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria from the seller.

24. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

forwarding the bids onto the seller; and

receiving a bid selection from the seller.

25. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a bid with a lowest shipping price.

26. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a default shipper if none of the bids conform to the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

27. (canceled)